

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5941

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3016

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IT

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH COUNT AGUSTA

REF: STATE 011519

1. AT PRIVATE LUNCHEON WITH AMBASSADOR FEBRUARY 20, COUNT AGUSTA (PRESIDENT, AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURING COMPANY) DISCUSSED BOTH CURRENT STATE HIS EFFORTS PROMOTE A-109 HELICOPTER (BRIEFLY) AND CURRENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION (AT LENGTH).

2. AGUSTA INDICATED THAT HIS PROPOSAL TO REACH A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITALY ON THE BRITISH MODEL HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY HIS INTERLOCUTORS IN WASHINGTON LAST DECEMBER. THERE HAD, HOWEVER, BEEN A BIT OF DIFFICULTY WITH THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. APPARENTLY, THE MFA, FOLLOWING HIS INITIAL CONTACT (WITH ITS BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS), HAD AGREED TO SUPPORT HIS PROPOSAL AND HAD IN FACT INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR GAJA IN WASHINGTON TO THAT EFFECT. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, HOWEVER, "OTHER ELEMENTS" IN THE MFA (THE NATO DIRECTORATE) HAD INTERPOSED OBJECTIONS SUGGESTING THAT THE ITALIAN POSITION IN THE ALLIANCE IN OPPOSITION TO THE US/UK MOU AS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF STANDARDIZATION MADE A REQUEST FOR SIMILAR AGREEMENT BETWEEN ITALY AND THE U.S. DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY. AS A RESULT, GAJA RECEIVED NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO IGNORE THE FIRST MESSAGE. IN A SUBSEQUENT CALL ON THE MFA, THE COUNT  
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APPARENTLY WAS ABLE TO RESOLVE THE DILEMMA IN HIS FAVOR AND HE REPORTED THAT GAJA NOW HAS RECEIVED AN INSTRUCTION TO PRO-

CEED AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED.

3. AGUSTA IS HIGHLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE CURRENT EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN ITALY. IN THIS MOMENT OF CRISIS, HE ASSERTED, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, INSTEAD OF DEVOTING THEIR TIME AND ENERGIES TO THE KINDS OF ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN AND STABILIZE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, HAVE IMMERSSED THEMSELVES IN THE SAME OLD FACTIONAL MANEUVERING. THE COUNT WAS NOT DISTURBED BY THE REVELATIONS OF CIA INVOLVEMENT ON THE DOMESTIC ITALIAN SCENE. IN HIS VIEW THAT KIND OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS BENEVOLENT. WHAT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE WENT TO THE SUPPORT OF A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTY AND PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CREATING AND PRESERVING WHAT DEMOCRACY ITALY HAS ENJOYED SINCE WORLD II. THE CONTINUING STORY OF LOCKHEED CORRUPTION OF ITALIAN OFFICIALS, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS HIGHLY DAMAGING. FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE, THE IRRESPONSIBLE, "MAD" BEHAVIOR OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE U.S. SENATE IS NOT ONLY DESTROYING FRIENDS OF THE U.S. IN ITALY AND ELSEWHERE. IN ITALY IN PARTICULAR IT IS FURTHER DESTABILIZING AN ALREADY SERIOUSLY TROUBLED SITUATION. AGUSTA BELIEVED THAT MUCH OF THE CONTINUING IMPETUS FOR THE HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE IN ITALY OF THE CURRENT "SCANDALS" CAME FROM INDUSTRIALIST GIANNI AGNELLI WHOSE NEWSPAPER "LA STAMPA" KEEPS FEEDING THE MEDIA FIRE. AGNELLI'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS (MOST RECENTLY IN A DER SPIEGEL ARTICLE) MAKE CLEAR HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMODATE TO THE COMMUNISTS, IN THE NAIVE BELIEF THAT ITALIAN COMMUNISTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF EASTERN EUROPE. AGUSTA MOST VEHEMENTLY DOES NOT AGREE.

4. THERE IS A GREAT APATHY IN ITALY TODAY, AGUSTA SAID. FEW ITALIANS UNDERSTAND THE THREAT POSED BY THE POSSIBLE ENTRY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO GOVERNMENT, FEWER STILL ARE PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. OF ALL THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, HE THOUGHT PERHAPS ONLY ANDREOTTI AND FORLANI MIGHT BE AMONG THOSE WHO WOULD PUT THE WELFARE OF THE COUNTRY AHEAD OF PERSONAL OR PARTY FACTION INTERESTS...BUT HE WAS NOT EVEN SURE ABOUT THEM. HE WAS NOT, HOWEVER, PREPARED TO GIVE UP ALL HOPE. THERE WAS SOME WILL LEFT IN ITALY TO KEEP THE COUNTRY FREE. THAT WILL NEEDS DIRECTION, HOWEVER. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS  
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DO NOT NEED MONEY FROM ABROAD, THEY NEED LEADERSHIP, A PROGRAM AND ENCOURAGEMENT. THE KIND OF MONEY NEEDED TO RUN AN EFFECTIVE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IS AVAILABLE IN ITALY. WHAT IS NOT AVAILABLE IS THE CAMPAIGN KNOW-HOW AND THE DISINTERESTED DIRECTION THAT WOULD SEE THAT THE MONEY WAS SPENT TO GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE ELECTED, NOT FIND ITS WAYS INTO PRIVATE POCKETS.

5. THE SINCERITY OF AGUSTA'S CONCERN FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION AND DESIRE TO EXPRESS THAT CONCERN TO THE USG WAS IN THIS INSTANCE MEASURABLE IN PHYSICAL PAIN. HE HAD COME HEAVILY

MEDICATED FROM A SICK BED, SUFFERING FROM THE FLU AND FROM A  
KIDNEY STONE LODGED IN THE URETER. VOLPE

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